

HIGHLAND PLAN COMMISSION
Study Session Minutes
August 5, 2020

Study Session began at 6:30 P.M. via a virtual meeting (Zoom Platform) Meeting ID (910 8701 5410) Password (462396).

In attendance were: Commissioners Kendra, Martini, Kisse and Zemen. Commissioner's Vander Woude, Turich and Grzymski were absent. Also in attendance were Building Commissioner/Zoning Administrator Ken Mika, Plan Commission Engineer John Phipps and Nies Engineer Derek Snyder.

Carmen Arvia of DVG Team was present via zoom to discuss a proposed gas station/convenience store at the northeast corner of Indianapolis Blvd. and Hart Rd., commonly known as 9337 Indianapolis Blvd.

Mr. Arvia referenced a punch list of items that needed to be addressed. Among those items were increasing the storm water detention area, redesign for traffic exiting onto Route 41 as a right out only, the traffic impact for Hart Rd. and the truck movement (their tanker) coming on to the site. He said that Gasvoda and Associates, a group out of Calumet City would be helping to specify the design of the pump station, specifically a centrifugal pump.

John Phipps asked if they would be maintaining the pump station for the life of the project or would maintenance be dedicated to the Town of Highland. Mr. Arvia said it would be a private service line and operated by the property.

Derek Snyder spoke to Mr. Arvia regarding the engineering of the proposed storm water detention area and meeting the ordinance requirements.

Mr. Arvia asked if the Town would have issues with a stepped retaining wall type pond to gain more volume and a little extra slope to the bottom. Mr. Phipps responded they have approved similar things in the past and spoke of safety issues and perhaps the need for fencing.

Commissioner Kendra asked about Lake County Drainage approval for a setback of 15 feet and if Mr. Arvia was successful in getting that approval. Mr. Arvia responded they are going for a variance for the setback and he had a very brief conversation with Don Oliphant who does the engineering reviews for the County. He said that Mr. Oliphant is aware of what they are trying to accomplish, but there are other processes that will take place prior to a serious conversation with Mr. Oliphant.

Commissioner Kendra asked Mr. Phipps in regards to the layout of the building, engineering wise, if it might be better to switch where the building is to where the detention pond is. Mr. Mika interjected that the petitioner will be seeking variances for setbacks so that would potentially, if they do that swap, it would be putting the building closer to where they don't want it.

Mr. Phipps said he believes it is the petitioner's responsibility to present the engineers with what the petitioners want and it's up to the engineer to approve or reject the presentations, rather than the engineer to try and design it for the petitioner.

Mr. Mika said that 9337 Indianapolis Blvd is zoned for a gas station, however he believes that some of the Plan Commission Members had concerns about putting a gas station in at this location, in part due to its high intensity use and tight intersection regarding traffic.

Mr. Arvia spoke that based on conversations with INDOT and Robin Pappenheim, among some others, he doesn't feel that the Use of the property along with the driveway layout doesn't make any large problems. He feels that they will be improving the location. Chris Kalischefski agreed with Mr. Arvia.

Commissioner Martini said he doesn't have any issues with the project, except for the tankers getting back out on to the street.

Mr. Arvia referenced the revision of the tankers that they would now come from a southward direction on 41, make a left hand turn onto Hart St., would utilize the left hand turn lane to pull into the site.

Mr. Mika asked about the east bound lane off of 41 on Hart. He believed it to be a single lane. He had concerns about the tanker trucks turn maneuverability. He thought that during peak traffic times, the truck could get stuck from making the turn. Derek Snyder agreed that could present a problem. Mr. Arvia thought that perhaps they could put a left hand turn lane off of Hart St. into their property. Mr. Mika thought this would create more of an issue for westbound traffic on Hart St during peak times. Commissioner Martini agreed. Mr. Arvia said the tankers would be delivering fuel at off peak times. Mr. Phipps posed a scenario of the tanker getting stuck to turn and having to back up. Mr. Arvia said they would revisit this with their engineering department.

The owners of the proposed gas station commented on a few items. They said they are a local company, not a big corporation. One of their gas stations is a new Citgo at the corner of I-65 and 109th St and another one is a Shell gas station in St. John. at Route 231 & 41. He said he didn't feel this gas station would produce as much traffic as a BP or Family Express and this gas station would not be open 24 hours. The hours would be 5:00 am to 11:00 pm. They are willing to work with the Town to provide them with what they need to do get this approved.

There was more discussion regarding traffic and the configuration of the in and out traffic for the station.

Commissioner Martini asked when the next time would be to talk about resolving these issues and Mr. Mika said they should attend the next study session. One of the issues would have to be resolved through the BZA, that being the canopy projection on the front building line. Mr. Mika wanted the petitioner to check and make sure they would be able to get on the BZA agenda in the timeline allowed for the next BZA meeting. There was also a discussion about getting the revisions required to Nies Engineering in a timely manner.

Study Session ended at 7:50 P.M.

Ken Mika

Building Commissioner / Zoning Administrator